

- 1 Osprey . . . . . *Pandion*.  
 4 Falcons . . . . . *Falco*.  
 3 Hawks . . . . . *Astur* and *Accipiter*.  
 3 Kites . . . . . 2 *Milvus* and 1 *Elanus*.  
 1 New form allied to *Pernis*.  
 1 Harrier . . . . . *Circus*.  
 8 Owls . . . . . *Strix* and *Noctua* or *Athene*."

## BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH.

February 8th, 1838.—Professor Graham, President, in the Chair.

A letter from Dr. Tyacke was read, containing an account of a botanical excursion in the spring of 1837 to the Channel Islands and the coast of France, with remarks on several of the species collected.

Observations by Dr. Graham on Plants collected in Scotland in 1837 by Dr. M'Nab were read. He noticed particularly the following :

*Arenaria norvegica*, first seen on Serpentine Hills to the northward of Balta Sound, Shetland, by a son of Dr. Edmonstone, and afterwards found by Dr. M'Nab in the same place. Specimens collected by Dr. Pollexfen in 1835, were shown to the Society.

*Cerastium latifolium*, var. With dense cæspitose habit, orbicular leaves, profusely glandular pubescence, and straight cylindrical capsule, scarcely longer than the calyx. *Hab.* Shetland.

*Lychnis dioica*, var. With pale rose-coloured flowers, and stem rarely three inches high. Seen by Mr. James M'Nab some years ago, and found to retain its peculiar habit in cultivation. *Hab.* Near Newton Stewart, Galloway.

*Agrostis canina*, var. is perhaps *Trichodium alpinum* or *rupestre*. Dr. Graham thinks the absence of the inner valve of the perianth, though not a generic, is a good specific character. Plant first noticed by Dr. Graham in Sutherlandshire some years ago, and afterwards by Mr. Wm. M'Nab in a viviparous state in the same county. *Hab.* On the top of Goatfel, Arran.

*Fedia mixta*, Vahl. Specimens were gathered along with this, showing the transition from *F. dentata*. *Hab.* Near Whithorn.

Mr. R. Falconer read a paper containing an account of the most celebrated gardens of antiquity, with observations on the hortulan taste which they exhibit. After some introductory remarks upon the probable origin of gardens, he proceeded to give a detailed account of the gardens of Alcinous mentioned by Homer; the Hanging Gardens of Babylon; the parks or gardens of the Persians mentioned by Xenophon; the gardens of Daphne in Syria, and the gardens of the Hesperides. He then gave an account of the gardens celebrated by the ancient Greeks and Romans; among the latter those of Lucullus

at Baiaë, of Pliny at Tusculum, and Laurentum. Mr. Falconer considers, that although a taste for gardening evidently prevailed to some extent among the ancients, yet that it never attained to any perfection except among modern nations. Flowers he also believes never constituted a peculiar feature of ancient gardens, and that they were not esteemed as objects of taste by the ancients, who appear to have cultivated them only as decorations to be employed on occasions of public and private rejoicing.

Mr. James Macaulay then read a paper, the object of which was to prove that flowers were esteemed by the ancients as objects of taste, and cultivated as a source of amusement. He argued that the very fact of flowers being deemed worthy of being offered to the gods proved a previous taste and value for them; and gave examples of gardens among the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Oriental nations, where *amœnitas*, and not *utilitas* alone, must have been the object in the cultivation of flowers. He next alluded to the gardens mentioned in the Latin classics, and contended that the garden of Lucullus, so often referred to, ought not to be regarded as a specimen either of the art or the taste of his time, as it was censured by his own contemporaries Cicero and Varro, the latter expressly stating "*Hortos Luculli non floribus fructibusque sed tabulis fuisse insignes.*" He also showed, on the authority of Horace, Martial, and Pliny, that the citizens of Rome used to cultivate plants in the balconies of their houses, and to rear flowers in boxes and in flower-pots, which were called "*Horti imaginarii*;" and that it is not likely the rich would do this merely to procure materials for their votive offerings, or to supply the ornaments for their entertainments; but that a taste for their cultivation as objects of amusement must also have prevailed.

Dr. Graham read the continuation of his observations on the plants collected in Scotland in 1837, by Dr. M'Nab.

*Erythræa littoralis*. Dr. Graham thinks it doubtful whether there is more than one British species of *Erythræa*; and if the present is to be considered distinct, that its only character would seem to rest on the narrow linear segments of the 5-partite calyx, equal to the tube of the corolla.—*Hab.* Brodick, Arran.

*Lathyrus maritimus* is apparently the plant of the North of Europe, of Canada, and of the United States as far south as Boston; and may be easily distinguished from *L. pisiformis* of Ledebour, or the figure of Gmelin quoted by him and in Hooker's British Flora, by the winged stem and the shape of the stipules. The variety which Dr. Graham considers to be the type of the species is distinguished by its compact robust growth, and by the common petioles being much arched backwards; whereas the present plant is of a slender

somewhat straggling habit, not from growing in wooded ground, but probably from being the inhabitant of the less genial climate to which the species is extended. It appears not to differ from *Lathyrus venosus* of American botanists. *Hab.* Sands on the shore at Barra Firth, Unst, Shetland, where Dr. Edmonstone had observed it for several years.

*Ervum tetraspermum* and *Allium arenarium*.—*Hab.* Néar Kirkcudbright.

*Cladium Mariscus*.—*Hab.* Ravenston Loch, Whithorn.

*Lamium intermedium*.—*Hab.* Shetland.

Mr. Campbell read a communication from Col. P. J. Brown of Eichenbühl near Thun, containing a sketch of the botany of the neighbourhood of the lake of Thun, Switzerland, chiefly in reference to the geographical distribution and altitude of the species enumerated. The lake of Thun having an elevation of about 1900 feet above the sea, and the surrounding country being much intersected by hills or long ridges, the vegetation assumes a subalpine character on the pastures about 1800 feet above the lake, comprising *Trollius europæus*, *Hieracium aureum*, *Tussilago alpina*, &c. The following is given as an approximation to the species usually met with at different altitudes on the surrounding mountains. Between 2000 and 3000 feet, *Arenaria verna* and *ciliata*, *Dryas octopetala*, *Cotoneaster vulgaris*, *Hieracium villosum*, &c. Between 3000 and 4000 feet, *Silene acaulis*, *Cerastium alpinum*, *Phaca astragalina*, *Oxytropis uralensis*, *Saxifraga oppositifolia*, *Hieracium aurantiacum*, *Arbutus alpina*, *Ajuga alpina*, *Orchis pallens*, *Carex atrata*, &c. Above 4000 feet, *Gnaphalium alpinum* and *Leontopodium*, *Petrocallis pyrenaica*, *Draba tomentosa* and *stellata*, *Androsace bryoides*, &c. Col. Brown concludes his paper by stating that he hopes to be able to communicate fuller information as to the precise elevations of the different localities mentioned on some future occasion.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

April 21.—Professor Wilson in the Chair.

Dr. Royle read a communication from Colonel Sykes, respecting the vegetable and other productions of the Deccan, having reference to a similar communication at the beginning of the year, showing their immense extent in the eastern continent and adjacent peninsula, which yet remained to be made subservient to the arts and manufactures of this country. The paper was accompanied by a great variety of specimens and an extensive herbarium. These he divided into the gummy, the astringent, the fibrous, the oil-producing, and the saponaceous and dyeing, being classified according to their uses in the arts. The caoutchouc, belonging to the first class, was be-